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Department of
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**Forest
Service**

Washington, D.C.
FS-382

Managing Change

The Forest Service in 1982

The year 1982[1] was a year of change—for the Nation, for the Federal Government, and for the Forest Service as a Government agency. The Nation as a whole was shifting down from a high-inflation economy to one that it is hoped will be a more stable, manageable one. Federal agencies were called upon to do their share to reduce spending and hold down the costs of Government. The Forest Service, no exception, faced the challenge of these changing times.

As an agency, we were determined not merely to cope with change, but to manage it, to look upon change as an opportunity to become more effective and efficient. In 1982, we moved aggressively in several directions to accomplish that goal. We believe we succeeded. As a result, our level of public service and our employee morale generally remain high.

One of the first steps was to make the organization as lean and efficient as we could and still carry out our program responsibilities. Wherever possible, we trimmed operations, particularly by consolidating and reducing staff units. For example, seven of the nine Regional Offices reorganized to reduce costs and better utilize their staffs. These changes alone resulted in expected savings of about $7.4 million a year.

In the South, we consolidated the Regional Office that administers the National Forest System there and the Southeastern Area Office for State and Private Forestry. Both were located in the same building in Atlanta and served the same States. The consolidation made economic as well as management sense. Adjustments to the Research program involved closing some smaller, high-cost laboratories and consolidating or terminating some work units.

During these reorganization actions, we took utmost care to avoid major disruptions to programs and people. We used outplacement, short-term details, and nonsalary savings as much as possible. Release of employees was the last resort.

We increased our use of automation to help reduce paperwork and improve communications among offices. Work on the Forest Level Information Processing System (FLIPS) progressed to the point of asking for vendor bids; plans are to have the system completed by fiscal year 1986.

Last year, our efforts to work more efficiently were not devoted entirely to streamlining and reorganizing. On another front, we were looking for helping hands, and the spectacular success of our volunteer program was one of the brightest Forest Service stories in doing more with less. The Forest Service volunteer program has existed since 1972; and since that time, volunteers have played an ever-increasing role. Volunteers can do almost anything that needs to be done in the Forest Service—from constructing trails to writing computer programs. Last year, as part of our effort to reduce operating costs without reducing services, we asked for the help of thousands of volunteers.

Clearing brush from trails was just one of the many activities performed by thousands of National Forest volunteers. Photo by Roger Jensen, The Oregonian.

And they responded by the thousands, 42,570 in all—retirees, students, vacationers, and many others including organizations—anxious to do their part to help. They contributed $14.9 million worth of work that otherwise would not have been done. In return, they received work experience, or perhaps an interesting vacation experience, and the personal satisfaction of a job well done. We thank them one and all for their help.

Other efforts to increase cost efficiency involved some new directions for our Research and State and Private Forestry programs. In Research, we made hard choices to better focus our main efforts on those highest priority programs that contribute directly to resource protection and increased resource productivity. Technical assistance, considered the most efficient way to provide needed services, has evolved as the heart of many of our State and Private Forestry programs.

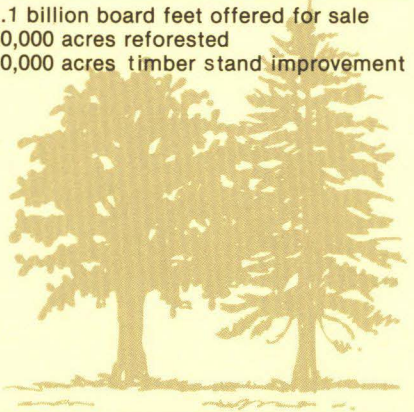
With an improved organizational structure in place, we also took steps to improve production of forest resources.

A large portion of the paper products, lumber for homes and furniture, red meat, outdoor recreation, and energy sources consumed by the American public come from the National Forest System. Production of these commodities was harshly affected by the changing economic situation in 1982. To continue the flow of these commodities to the American people required changes in some of our traditional ways of doing business.

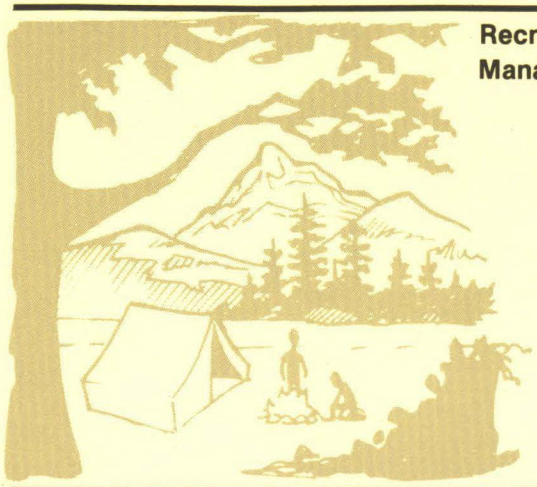
Some changes were required, for example, in our timber sale program. Production of timber, especially softwood sawtimber used for construction, was particularly hard hit by low demand created by fewer housing starts. Because of this reduced demand, many companies and individuals who had purchased National Forest timber when prices were higher could not afford to harvest what they had bought. Preventing the unemployment that would result in forest-dependent communities if there were widespread contract defaults was a primary concern in 1982. We allowed extensions of timber contracts for those who could not meet contract terms for harvest, and we deferred payments on deposits required during the extension period. But, even more important, we took action to help prevent a similar situation in the future. We changed procedures used to sell National Forest timber in ways that we believe will reduce speculative bidding and provide more orderly and prompt harvesting of the timber.

The National Forests and Grasslands provide grazing for cattle, sheep, and other livestock. In 1982, the fees charged livestock owners for grazing on these lands were reduced as required by law

11.1 billion board feet offered for sale
380,000 acres reforested
360,000 acres timber stand improvement



[1]Throughout this publication, "1982" refers to the fiscal year from October 1, 1981, to September 30, 1982.



Recreation and Wilderness Management—1982

12,500 developed sites

101,000 miles of trails

25,000 cultural properties

25 million acres wilderness

250,000 acres wild & scenic rivers

9 National Recreation Areas

to reflect lowered beef prices and increased production costs. The fees are determined according to a formula set by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act. Also during the year, with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, we began a joint appraisal of the fair market value of grazing fees as part of a total review and evaluation of the way they are established. The purpose is to help determine the most equitable fee formula for both the livestock industry and the public.

We also looked at new ways of dealing with oil and gas leasing applications. The rapidly increasing demands for oil and gas leasing in the National Forests in the past several years have caused a backlog of lease applications waiting to be processed. We have concentrated efforts on reducing this backlog and have generally succeeded. But, realizing that merely coping with the backlog was not enough, we looked at a new way of managing the situation by testing a contingent rights stipulation (CRS) in recommending or consenting to oil, gas, and geothermal leases. This means that, instead of conducting an environmental review before granting a lease, we can grant the lease with the stipulation that the detailed review will be conducted after exploratory drilling when operations are actually proposed. Since less than 5 percent of all Federal oil and gas leases are actually drilled, this should save time and money as well as reduce the applications backlog.

Although not always thought of as a commodity, outdoor recreation is a very important product of the National Forest System. More outdoor recreation occurs on these lands than on any other Federal land. In 1982, recreation use was 233.4 million visitor-days, virtually unchanged from the record-high level of 1981. This is the approximate equivalent of a 12-hour visit to the National Forest System by every man, woman, and child in the United States.

The Forest Service is a Federal agency that contributes money to the U.S. Treasury, instead of just spending it. Timber sales, grazing fees, oil and gas leases, as well as recreation and other land uses on the National Forest System, all produce revenues for the Government. These revenues were also affected by the changing economy. Since timber sales account for the greater part of these receipts, the decline in timber markets caused a reduction in receipts in 1982. Nonetheless, $730 million was contributed to the U.S. Treasury, of which 25 percent goes to counties where National Forest System lands are located to be used for local schools and roads.

Forest productivity tomorrow depends on how well we plan for it today. Future supplies of timber, grazing forage, wildlife, recreation, water, and wilderness all depend on how well we go about planning for a continuation of these renewable resources.

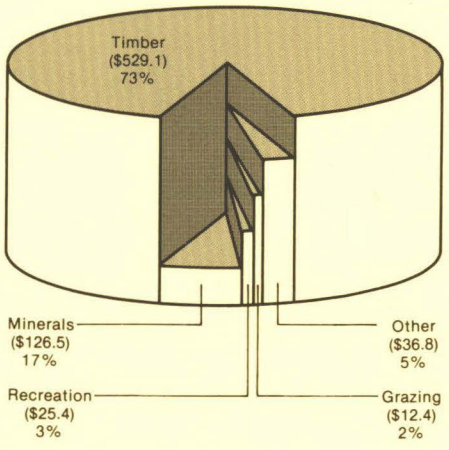
In 1982, we began work on the preparation of the 1985 Resources Planning Act (RPA) Program—the third such program to be produced. The program sets goals for resource production and determines what Forest Service activities should achieve to insure those goals are reached.

As a first step in hammering out the next program, we solicited public comments on what the national goals for 10 resource opportunity areas should be. The responses are now being used to develop program alternatives.

The RPA Program provides a broad outline for planning, but the specifics are filled in at the Forest level. The National Forest System land and management planning regulations guide this planning process. We have simplified and reorganized the regulations to make the planning easier to do and easier to understand. With the new regulations in place, we are continuing to develop, on schedule, integrated resource plans for the management of each National Forest unit and each Region. All Regions had draft plans prepared by the end of fiscal year 1982, as did 22 of the 120 Forest units. By law, all Forest plans must be completed by the end of 1985.

States, too, are working on State resource plans with financial and technical assistance from our State and Private Forestry program. Eight States had completed plans by the end of the fiscal year and another 31 are scheduled for completion in 1983.

Distribution of Receipts by Program
(Million Dollars)



Total 1982 receipts—$730.2 million

The spectacular 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens on the Gifford Pinchot National Forest in Washington was obviously not planned for, but we did move immediately afterward to plan for management of the area. We completed a management plan in 1982 to allow us to provide for both protection and use of the area. Congress underscored the national importance of the area by designating it as the Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, the third National Monument to be administered by the Forest Service.

Another addition to the National Forest System in 1982 was the Pennzoil Company's donation of 100,000 acres of the Vermejo Ranch property in northern New Mexico. Known for its scenic beauty and natural resources, this area, now the Valle Vidal Unit of the Carson National Forest, will provide additional outdoor recreation opportunities for the public, as well as additional supplies of timber, grazing forage, and minerals.

As managers of National Forest System lands, we have generally been concerned with protecting and managing natural resources such as these. But an unusual change, the rapidly increasing use of National Forest lands for illegal activities such as cultivation of marijuana, has been testing traditional forest management.

Vast and remote, the Forests provide locations that are both ideal for such illicit use and difficult to keep under surveillance. Since these activities pose danger to Forest visitors, users, and wildlife, we increased our cooperative efforts with local, State, and other Federal agencies to reduce the number of successful marijuana-growing operations on National Forests.

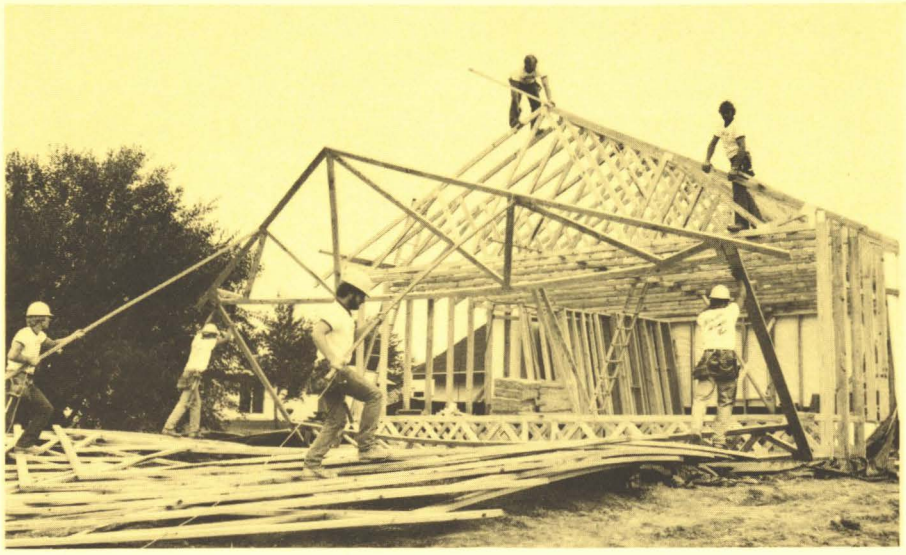
In Arkansas, for example, after threats to a Forest Service employee led to the discovery of a large marijuana "garden," these cooperative efforts resulted in the eradication of over 10,000 cultivated marijuana plants with an estimated wholesale value of $20 million.

We worked with the national media to make Forest users and the general public aware of the problems and possible danger. Also, after several years of development work, we now have available to us a computerized system to store, organize, and analyze information on criminal activities on the National Forests to help us use our law enforcement resources most effectively.

Action against more traditional forest pests—insects and diseases—focused on the integrated use of biological, mechanical, and chemical methods of control in 1982. One of our targets was the gypsy moth, which defoliated almost 13 million acres of hardwoods in 1981, primarily in the East. We worked with the affected States to battle the pest and increase funding for suppression activities. The Forest Insect and Disease Laboratory in Hamden, Conn., was renamed the Center for Biological Control of Northeastern Forest Insects and Diseases to more accurately reflect Forest Service efforts to manage forest insect and disease pests such as the gypsy moth.

Fortunately, another forest scourge—extensive and uncontrollable wildfires—did not strike the National Forest System in 1982. Above-normal precipitation combined with cooler temperatures to result in an historic low of 60,526 acres burned. By anticipating this lower fire activity, we were able to reduce firefighting costs by at least $50 million.

Forest insects and fire do not recognize international boundaries such as the one between the United States and Canada. So, to make it easier for the forestry agencies in each country to work cooperatively on emergencies and other forestry projects, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1982, which will eliminate the need for time-consuming negotiations and separate agreements for each project. As one immediate result of this understanding, the two countries began work to develop a common technology for more efficient use of wood in house construction.



More than a thousand homes in 15 States have been built with the trussed-frame house construction system developed by the Forest Service.

With regard to more efficient wood use in construction, we are particularly proud of one of our research efforts made available to the general public in 1982. Developed by scientists at the Forest Products Laboratory, the truss-framed house construction system will help provide many Americans with housing they otherwise might not have been able to afford. This is because the system uses less lumber for framing, and houses can be built so quickly that there are considerable savings in labor and construction costs. The system is also stronger and provides more flexibility in arranging rooms. We launched a 3-year plan to pass on the technology to builders, fabricators, and the public. A number of these homes have already been built and have been praised by builders and owners alike.

These are but a few highlights of the many activities undertaken by the Forest Service in fiscal year 1982, continuing a solid tradition of public service.

The year before, the Forest Service was pleased to be recognized as 1 of 10 highly successful organizations in the country in a study conducted by the Office of Personnel Management and Pennsylvania State University. Forest Service people were found to have a deep, genuine commitment to the agency's mission, a mission that the study called extremely stable, firmly established in history, highly appropriate at present, and well suited to the future.

It is this continuing personal commitment of Forest Service people to "our" mission that has allowed us to develop new and more efficient ways of operating with less. Our objective in 1982 was to do this with the least possible impact on people and programs and thereby to maintain our high level of service to the American public. Thanks to our dedicated employees, we succeeded.

1982 Statistics

National Forest System — 190.8 million acres

Timber sold — 10.0 billion board feet

Timber harvested — 6.7 billion board feet

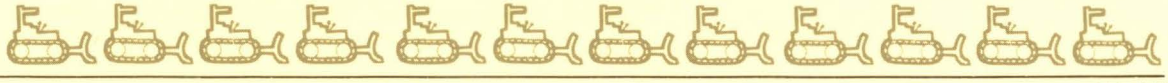
Livestock grazed — 8.9 million animal unit months

Recreation use — 233.4 million visitor days

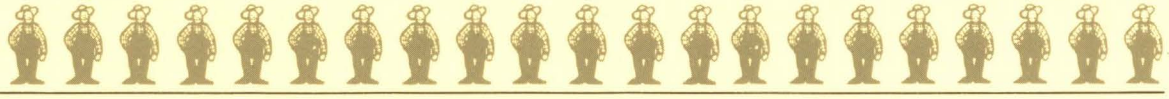
Mineral operating plans processed — 29,405

Wildlife and fish habitat improvements — 299,969 acres

Roads maintained — 300,872 miles



Woodland owners assisted — 141,472



Human Resource Programs — 72,213 persons served

Permanent full-time employees — 30,375

Receipts — $730.2 million

Expenditures — $1.99 billion

The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, is responsible for Federal leadership in forestry. It carries out this role through four main activities:

- Protection and management of resources on 191 million acres of National Forest System lands.
- Cooperation with State and local governments, forest industries, and private landowners to help protect and manage non-Federal forest and associated range and watershed lands.
- Research on all aspects of forestry, rangeland management, and forest resources utilization.
- Participation with other agencies in human resource and community assistance programs to improve living conditions in rural areas.

The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument, Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

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